



Frio escapees reportedly made selves at home in S.A.

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Four prison escapees from Frio County hid out in a North San Antonio neighborhood amid children playing basketball and skateboarding as a massive manhunt was conducted in South Texas, authorities said Wednesday.

Residents returning home to Trudell Drive were shocked to learn authorities allege one of their neighbors secretly harbored the fugitives for at least one week.

The four, who were among five inmates who made a daring daylight escape last month from the Frio County Jail in Pearsall, since have moved on.

It wasn't immediately known if a fifth inmate was with the others in San Antonio.

Federal agents arrested Debra Ayala, 44, without incident inside her home Wednesday on charges of aiding and abetting. A second person, 42-year-old Randy Folsom, was arrested Tuesday night in an undisclosed location in San Antonio. Folsom was charged with aiding and abetting the fugitives.

Assistant U.S. Attorney David Counts asked they both be held without bond. A bond hearing is set for Sept. 20 at 9:30 a.m.

Authorities declined to reveal how Ayala and Folsom knew the five prison escapees, but did say none of the fugitives was related to the two suspects.

More arrests are anticipated and at least one person — Robert Lee Jack, 32, of San Antonio — is wanted in connection with the escape, authorities said.

"Folsom and Ayala are only the first arrests in the conspiracy to aid in the escape of federal inmates from the Frio County Jail," U.S. Marshal LaFayette Collins said in a statement. "The United States Marshals Service will tirelessly pursue all persons who created a situation which enabled these prisoners to escape."

The five fugitives slipped to freedom Aug. 6 through holes cut in two perimeter fences surrounding a recreational yard. A witness told authorities she saw the men climb into a vehicle before fleeing the area.

One of the fugitives was arrested 10 days later when he surrendered to the U.S. Marshals Service at his father's home in Laredo.

Manuel de La Fuente, 33, didn't want to be running and hiding from authorities, said his father, 80-year-old Rafael de la Fuente.

Three of the escapees who police allege stayed on Trudell and the fifth inmate remain on the lam. They have been identified as Jorge Arturo Castaneda Silva, 23; Luis Angel Garcia Esparza, 23; Victor Hugo Nava Franco, 28; and Reymundo Alaniz Flores, 46.

Authorities said after repeated questioning, de La Fuente led them to San Antonio and Ayala's blue home in the 200 block of Trudell Drive.

According to an arrest affidavit, the day of the escape, a man helped cut the outer fence, while one of the inmates cut through the inner fence. De la Fuente told authorities the escapees were driven away in two vehicles.

"De la Fuente stated that they stayed with Ayala for approximately one week and that Ayala not only secreted the fugitives, but also clothed and fed them," the affidavit states.

Neighbors were shocked and dismayed after learning federal agents had handcuffed Ayala, a mother of two teenage boys

and a girl.

"It is frightening to us," said Alma Castro, 46. "This is a neighborhood with lots of families, with children playing outside. This has never happened here."

Other neighbors spoke on condition their names were not used.

One neighbor who has lived in the neighborhood for two years said she was shocked to learn escaped fugitives had been staying in her neighborhood.

"It makes me really nervous," she said.

Another neighbor worried about Ayala's kids.

"They are good kids," she said. Ayala's children often played with hers, she said.

The breakout at the Frio jail led the Marshals Service to remove the 240 remaining federal inmates from the jail, citing security concerns. That led Frio County officials to decide on layoffs for as many as 30 of the jail's 55 employees.

The Marshals Service is offering rewards of \$10,000 apiece for information leading to the recapture of the inmates.

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